

SENATE RESOLUTION 53—TO DESIGNATE "NATIONAL SCHOOL VIOLENCE VICTIMS' MEMORIAL DAY"

By Mr. HUTCHINSON (for himself, Mr. BUNNING, Mr. SPECTER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. ASHCROFT, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. JEFFORDS, Mr. HELMS, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. MURKOWSKI, Mr. ABRAHAM, Mr. COVERDELL, Mr. GRAMS, Mr. THURMOND, Mr. ENZI, Mr. WELLSTONE, Mr. HATCH, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. REID, Mr. ROBB, Mr. BIDEN, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. CONRAD, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. EDWARDS, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. BURNS, Mr. CLELAND, Mr. REED, Mr. DASCHLE, Mr. CAMPBELL, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. KOHL, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. KERREY, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mrs. LINCOLN, and Mr. LIEBERMAN) submitted the resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 53

Whereas approximately 10 percent of all public schools reported at least 1 serious violent crime to a law enforcement agency over the course of the 1996-97 school year;

Whereas in 1996, approximately 225,000 students between the ages of 12 and 18 were victims of nonfatal violent crime in schools in the United States;

Whereas during 1992 through 1994, 76 students and 29 non-students were victims of murders or suicides that were committed in schools in the United States;

Whereas because of escalating school violence, the children of the United States are increasingly afraid that they will be attacked or harmed at school;

Whereas efforts must be made to decrease incidences of school violence through an annual remembrance and prevention education; and

Whereas the Senate encourages school administrators in the United States to develop school violence awareness activities and programs for implementation on March 24, 1999: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 24, 1999, as "National School Violence Victims' Memorial Day"; and

(2) requests the President to issue a proclamation designating March 24, 1999, as "National School Violence Victims' Memorial Day" and calling on the people of the United States to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. President, I rise today to submit a resolution which is very much related to the educational crisis in our country. This resolution will designate March 24 as National School Violence Victims' Memorial Day and encourage the citizens of our Nation to honor and remember the victims of school violence on that day.

The resolution also will encourage our school administrators to conduct programs on that day designed to prevent any further occurrences of school violence.

I am deeply saddened that the introduction of such a resolution is even necessary.

No words can ever adequately express the incredible shock, horror, and grief that struck me when I heard the news reports of the tragedy which left 5 dead and 11 wounded at the Westside Middle School in Jonesboro, AR.

No words will ever be able to completely convey the cruel and senseless loss that the families and friends of Natalie Brooks, Paige Ann Herring, Stephanie Johnson, Brittheny Varner, and Shannon Wright experienced on March 24, 1998.

And no words will ever be able to sufficiently honor Shannon Wright's memory and her heroic sacrifice. I know that the actions she took to protect her students at the cost of her own life will forever be remembered. Her actions were motivated out of love for her students and touched the lives of thousands of Arkansans, one of whom, Ms. Jennifer Morris, a student in Harrisburg, AR, was so inspired by Ms. Wright's loving and courageous sacrifice that she wrote and asked me to introduce legislation which would create a National Shannon Wright Day.

Tragically, other communities, other families, and other friends know the pain of such senseless losses as well.

Paducah, KY, Pearl, MS, Richmond, VA, Springfield, OR, Edinboro, PA, are just a few of the communities that will forever remember the tragic results of school violence.

According to the Departments of Education and Justice, over the course of the 1996-1997 school year 10 percent of all public schools reported at least one serious violent crime to a law enforcement agency; and in 1996, 225,000 of our students between the ages of 12 and 18 were victims of nonfatal violent crime in our schools. Between 1992 and 1994, 76 students and 29 nonstudents lost their lives in murders or suicides committed in American schools.

Finally, Mr. President, the percentage of our students who are afraid that they will be attacked or harmed at school is rising dramatically.

I am not here today to discuss the causes and solutions to school violence. Rather, I am simply here to honor and remember the victims of school violence. Many of my colleagues who co-sponsored this resolution have differing approaches on what we do to solve the problem. Many have different ideas on what the causes and solutions to school violence are. However, we all agree that we must end this violence in our classrooms and restore the peace that our children once had in their hearts and are entitled to enjoy once again.

Accordingly, I now introduce this resolution to create National School Violence Victims' Memorial Day to ensure that we remember and that we honor those who have been victims of school violence and do all that we can to remove violence from our schools and restore peace in the hearts of our students.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise today to co-sponsor a Senate Resolu-

tion to designate March 24, 1999 as National School Violence Victims Memorial Day.

Just last week I spoke to the Montana State Legislature and introduced an education action plan, a major part of which is making sure our kids are safe in America's schools. While I was home I saw Steve Bullock. Steve works for our Attorney General, and every time I see Steve I remember his stepbrother, Jeremy.

You see, Jeremy was 11. He and his twin brother Joshua left for school together as they always did. The day was April 12, 1994. Jeremy didn't come home from school that day. He was shot and killed on the playground, leaving a family and a community forever changed.

By recognizing March 24th as National School Violence Victims Memorial Day we will be honoring the memory of Jeremy Bullock and countless other children, families and communities by saying clearly, with one voice that we as Americans will meet the challenge of eradicating violence from our schools.

It is, in many ways a challenge to decide what kind of a people we are. A challenge to stand up for peace and safety against violence and hatred. This is about remembering the victims of school violence and it is about what we are going to do in their names.

The easy reaction to this kind of senseless violence is to cast blame and to turn our communities into one big episode of the Jerry Springer show. But we have as a nation, more often than not, chosen what has historically been the more difficult road. The road to peace through dialogue, understanding and compassion. That is what National School Violence Victims Memorial Day is all about.

Seventy five years ago, Mahatma Gandhi put it this way. He said "I discovered that pursuit of truth did not permit violence being inflicted on one's opponent but that he must be weaned from error by patience."

We must use this day to teach and to learn. We must talk about the 225,000 victims of violent crime. We must act to make schools safer for parents, teachers and students and we must learn from our mistakes.

And we are always learning. Learning the lessons of the past, committed to using that knowledge to build a better tomorrow. So let us enact this resolution, resolved to working together as one community of people to make America a better place. A place where patience wins out over bloodshed and where truth, as Gandhi said, does not permit violence.

And let us always remember Jeremy Bullock. For though he is gone, his memory will help fuel our work. When I think of Jeremy I am always reminded of a poem called For The Fallen that goes this way:

They shall not grow old, as we that are left  
to grow old;  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the  
morning we will remember them.